



Prince of the eye: Philip Hofer and the Harvard Library

Citation

Bentinck-Smith, William. 1985. Prince of the eye: Philip Hofer and the Harvard Library. Harvard Library Bulletin XXXII (4), Fall 1984: 317-347.

Permanent link

<https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37364127>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Prince of the Eye: Philip Hofer and the Harvard Library

William Bentinck-Smith

HARVARD has been fortunate in the number of its supporters who have with a passionate dedication assembled the materials of scholarship. Whether those collections be of books or art objects, herbarium specimens or case study records, the University will always have cause to be grateful for individuals like Archibald Coolidge, Paul Sachs, Asa Gray, James Barr Ames, or Wallace B. Donham.

And we can add to that roster of immortals other names, including that of Philip Hofer, A.B. 1921, A.M. 1929, Litt.D. 1967, librarian, trustee, world traveler, collector and donor, founder and long curator of the College Library's Department of Printing and Graphic Arts. With his death on 9 November 1984, the extent of Hofer's contribution to the University and its library has come into sharp focus. During almost half a century he devoted a fair share of his irrepressible energy, his business sense, much of his personal fortune, and the discernment of the born collector to enlarging the Library's store of well printed and illustrated books of importance to humankind, as well as to emphasizing the cultural significance of the means of recording and spreading knowledge through the art and production of the book, from pen to computer.*

*This article, the first of two, relies heavily on personal acquaintance, personal correspondence, Harvard class reports and other printed reminiscences, and in particular, on recorded interviews with Philip Hofer, conducted by Rene Kuhn Bryant in 1980, and by William Bentinck-Smith in 1982 to 1984. The quotations, all from the recorded interviews, have been condensed and slightly edited for style.

The author first met Philip Hofer in 1940 and, as Honorary Curator of Type Specimens and Letter Design, was associated with Hofer's department for some thirty years. The phrase "prince of the eye" used in the title was applied to Hofer by his lifelong friend, Georges Heilbrun, the Parisian antiquarian bookman.

Knowing Philip Hofer, one would not be surprised if, having arrived in this world with a silver spoon in his mouth, he almost instantly removed it to study its style and hallmarks. For Hofer was acquisitive by nature, which in his own words implies such lifelong avidity that even with one's last breath one reaches to touch the chaplain's prayerbook to make sure it is the Book of Common Prayer designed by a typographer with at least the standing of Daniel Berkeley Updike.

Philip Hofer was a man of contending moods and often sharp contrasts, and his personality is not easy to characterize. First glance revealed a man of medium height, lean and sinewy build, with sparkling pale blue eyes, arched eyebrows and the profile of a Roman consul, with broad cheekbones and firm straight mouth, sharply defined. But the expression was never quiescent — impossible for an artist to capture — for his was a character in which the emotions played an important part. His generous store of years slowed the naturally quick, lithe movements, but not the decisiveness which sprang from inner sources of nervous energy and fervency. Altogether he was a man of firm opinions, governed by strong impulses, self-reliant and not easily defeated. Impulsively generous, or irately hostile when aroused, he made a loyal friend and a formidable opponent. Unflaggingly industrious, boundlessly energetic, he was dogged in the pursuit of objectives and seldom paused until his fount of energy ran dry. He was high-strung and passionate in matters of right and wrong, likes and dislikes, and it is safe to say that he was almost always right, for with his purposeful personality went a strong sense of fairness; yet there were those times when his emotional attachment to people or causes led him into hasty judgments from which he was not easy to budge. But he was too good a man to take himself too seriously or not to laugh at his own foibles. In a moment of self-characterization he reflected: "I am too impetuous, too sensitive, too combative at times; too devoted at others. I go up and down in moods just like the fish in my astrological sign. I have been too pessimistic most of my life and melancholic in my quiet hours."

Fortunately his friends and colleagues most often saw the upbeat Hofer and less often met the Hofer of gloom or melancholy. They knew the man of brightness and verve, ardent and enthusiastic in his love of art and books, joyous and gregarious in his liking for people,

especially those with somewhat similar tastes. He possessed broad intellectual interests and was equally fascinated by both the natural and the financial world, perfectly easy in conversation whether the topic was the bird population or the airplane industry.

Perhaps his greatest gift was his critical eye. He trained himself where and how to look at an object that interested him, and he tried to look before he studied. And when he looked, he brought to bear his broadly educated, but at the same time strongly intuitive taste, which led him to make sound decisions in matters requiring aesthetic judgment. Along with this innate quality, which he fostered, broadened, and polished by long experience and study, went a particularly keen regard for value. Many have remarked on his ability to assess correctly the time to buy, and some of his most important acquisitions for Harvard were made when the objects collected were low in esteem and therefore low in price. Hofer was also a natural trader and risk-taker. He knew a good opportunity when he saw it, sensed instinctively a worthy but temporarily unappreciated subject, bought always for quality, yet also in anticipation of rising popularity and price.

Although his business intuition led him to know when he would receive fair value in library and museum acquisitions, and although he also used this acumen to enlarge his own fortune, his main objective was elsewhere. It was to improve Harvard's study collections of illuminated and calligraphic manuscripts and of illustrated books as well as reference works on the history of books and manuscripts. More specifically, he aimed to show the interrelationships among author, artist, scribe, and printer.

His passion for collecting also extended to his circle of friends and acquaintances. He genuinely loved people of all sorts, but particularly those in whom he found the basis of common social background, intellectuality, or unusual traits of character and skill. Naturally



This bookplate suggesting the potential frustrations of the ardent collector was cut for Philip Hofer by Rudolph Ruzicka, after a drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger.

effervescent in social situations, he was a marvelous conversationalist; his memory for names, places, dates, and family backgrounds, plus his love of the odd and exciting elements in the behavior of the varied sorts of people who crossed his path, added to his skills as a raconteur.

Close to the surface of his emotional makeup was a pleasingly romantic, even sentimental, strain that brought moisture to his eyes when the flags waved and the bands played — feelings not unrelated to the inner pleasure derived from composition, color, surface texture, letter shape, or poetic content. His enthusiasm was vibrantly contagious, as was his grand and courtly manner, which he liked to overdo for humorous effect. Yet behind the courtier's gallantry lay affection and truth rather than insincerity.

Hofer was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on 14 March 1898, the third and youngest son of Charles Frederick and Jane Arms Hofer. The Hofers were Alsatian by descent and could trace the paternal lineage back to Frederick Barbarossa, the twelfth-century Holy Roman Emperor. But this claim was made half jokingly, for Hofer was equally proud of the Civil War heroism of his grandfather Wick and the business success of the Wicks and Armses who played a part in the industrialization of northern Ohio. Eschewing ancestor worship, he was nevertheless deeply interested in his and others' roots and the interplay of family groups.

Hofer's infancy and early childhood were marked by delicate health, and much of his early schooling was at home. Although his ailment was diagnosed as anemia, its symptoms, he later suspected, were at least partly psychological in nature, encouraged by extreme parental concern for his well-being. Four years prior to his birth the Hofers had lost their first son, Charles F. Hofer III, at age eight, and this loss deeply affected his father, turning him into a melancholy and reclusive personality, while Philip's mother became overly concerned about her surviving children's health and safety.

Philip led a rather quiet existence. Almost five years younger than his older brother Myron, and surrounded by uncles and aunts considerably senior to his parents, he was even at an early age inclined to be solitary and bookish. Because his mother was often ill and his father preoccupied with his own interests, the boy was either thrown on his own resources or left to the rigid supervision of the domestic staff, particularly a domineering German governess. He grew up withdrawn and, according to his word, painfully shy. In the Hofers'

big Cincinnati house on Grandin Road in East Walnut Hills, Jennie Hofer (as his mother was called by her intimates) had assembled a splendid and substantial reading library where there were the collected works of all the standard Victorian authors — Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley — typical of the accepted literary taste of cultivated conservative families of the time — but also “a few deeper attractions,” such as the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, and Keats. Philip recalled becoming addicted to books as early as age six. His mother’s lovingly protective attitude did little to encourage him to get outdoors, so Philip staked out reading space for himself indoors (under the grand piano was a favorite lair), while his father was outside dealing with the horses, or tramping with the dogs, or splitting firewood.

In Maine it was a different story. When Philip was still a baby, the Hofers acquired a summer place on Penobscot Bay just west of Camden, and here in the pleasant summer weather of the Maine seacoast the boy, as he matured, began collecting such things as shells and seawashed stones. An initial inspiration was to arrange slimy sea creatures in the family’s breakfast finger bowls, a lighthearted prank that did not win applause; more appreciated were the colorful stones which he split in pieces and displayed in water for their iridescent colors.

Perhaps this was the beginning of his urge to collect and his strong love of beauty in nature; at least he thought so. Later came postage stamps, and still later an interest in books and pictures. But his taste did not begin to take form until college. From a Cincinnati day school near his home he was sent in 1911 to Pomfret School, a small independent boarding school of about 130 students in Pomfret, Connecticut. There the program was athletically oriented; but Philip, although late maturing (his voice did not deepen until he was past sixteen) and underweight and undersized for his age, managed to come to terms with the popular athletic standard by earning his class numerals in tennis and even playing intramural football, which at the time seemed vitally significant in the local scale of values. More important for the future, he led his class in studies for five of the six years he was there.

Although Philip generally disliked his boarding school experience, the school still helped to plant a few more seeds of intellectual interest in addition to those from his home environment. And it taught him the value of sociability and competition. He made good friends there,

among both faculty and students, particularly a lifelong friend, his classmate Wendell Davis, later a New York lawyer, who went on with him to Harvard and roomed with him all four years of their war-interrupted college life.

Philip early resolved to put behind him his childhood shyness and isolation, and by 1917 when he reached Cambridge, he was ready to throw himself into student activities in the effort to achieve standing among his peers. Since he came well prepared academically, Harvard seemed undemanding, and his field of concentration, English literature, was easy for him and gave him pleasure. Sensing that a non-athlete could find a popular niche in some managerial role, he entered the competition for freshman football manager, then a grueling ten-week daily stint, pushing heavy equipment carts, lugging demijohns of water, blankets, and sheepskin coats, and setting up tackling dummies and other obstacles for training. He never got past the final cut, but he made lots of new friends and his increased determination to succeed led him to seek the freshman hockey managership in the informal wartime regime of Robert Gross, 1919, varsity captain and coach. This time he came in second in the competition and was appointed assistant manager. In another area, however, he achieved the top spot — editor-in-chief of the *Harvard Freshman Red Book*, selected from a field of eighty-three candidates after a six-week competition. This annual volume, a photographic directory of Class members supplemented by articles describing the major freshman events and activities of the year, evidences concern about the war. The editors were solemnly aware of assembling a record of a Class which (Hofer noted ominously) "may never publish another." Indeed, "to carry on life in a normal manner when all the world is in agitation and personal feelings are in revolt is a hard task."

Military concerns surrounded his class. The reserve officers' training program in which Hofer took part was the most important activity of the entire university. Lieutenant Colonel James A. Shannon, Major William Francis Flynn, and the French military instructors Major P. J. Azan and Lieutenants Louis Allard and André Morize were as well known to the students as Kittredge or Lowes. The freshman dormitories were their barracks, Soldiers Field (or the Briggs Cage) their drill ground. Almost every weekend brought a combat exercise.

Yet there were secret joys. Hofer keenly remembered the buoyant mood that marked his descent into the Harvard Square subway when

*Harvard University Archives*

The 1921 varsity hockey team. Sophomore George Owen, Harvard nine-letter man who later teamed with Eddie Shore on defense for the Boston Bruins, sits to the left of captain Edward Bigelow. Philip Hofer, manager, stands at the extreme right in the last row.

a rare free day promised three or four hours to spend searching the Boston bookstores. If not N. J. Bartlett's on Cornhill, there was good-natured Mr. Frank C. Brown on Bromfield Street, where one could find English books of current interest or intriguing and inexpensive first editions. There was also Lauriat's on Washington Street, then specializing in fine reading editions of historical and literary classics, usually with excellent illustrations or handsome bindings. He cherished many of those early purchases to the end of his days, and they were among the last of his treasures to come to Harvard. After his raids on the bookstores, Philip would use what money he had left to pay for "a good little supper" at Thompson's Spa or some other excellent eating place.

America's entrance into the war changed all that. After the spring of his freshman year, Hofer went to the citizens' training camp at Plattsburg, New York, then to further summer training at Lancaster, Massachusetts, and finally in October 1918 to Camp Zachary Taylor,

Kentucky, as a candidate for commission in the U.S. Field Artillery (horse drawn). He got the commission as a second lieutenant, but he also contracted Spanish influenza and was ready for action too late to be shipped to Europe or any other theater of operations. Modestly endowed with back pay, he returned to Cambridge for one of the snowiest and iciest winters he could remember.

Again he went to the same bookshops but found that his taste was changing. Whereas first editions had originally appealed to him and still tempted him at times, the prices were often too high.

One of his early treasures that signified his changing taste was the Chiswick Press edition of Shakespeare (1830). Mr. Bartlett sold him that, as well as an outstanding Munchausen and a beautiful first edition of W. S. Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* with Gilbert's own woodcuts. Mr. Bartlett also became a source for Hofer's growing collection of Pickering imprints, many of them rebound by Zachnsdorf and other good binders, the foundation of a superb collection, later enhanced by purchases from the estate of Harold Murdock. Spurred by the enthusiasm imparted by Bliss Perry in his American literature course, he found perhaps his greatest early bargain in a first edition of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* obtained from Mr. Brown for \$4.50. Later he sold the book for a gain of ten dollars; but since he subsequently saw the price rise one hundred-fold, it was hard not to cringe at the memory of such a quick and impulsive profit. Still, he was not collecting books for investment but rather for personal satisfaction, and it was his lifelong claim that he never sold a book for money unless to obtain another book he wanted more.¹

Distant lands and peoples had provided the romantic background of much of his youthful reading, and two family trips to Europe, first when he was only eight and later when he was eleven, heightened his yearning for faraway places. At Lauriat's, thanks to a generous allowance from his father, he could indulge these whims with well-bound, handsomely printed and illustrated accounts of travel and adventure, like the tragic story of Sir John Franklin's ill-fated search for a north-west passage which ended in the Arctic ice in 1847.

¹ The author can recall one exception. Hofer spotted an inexplicably underpriced copy of G. B. Bodoni's *Epitbalansia* in an English book list and proposed a partnership in purchasing it as a duplicate for resale. The proceeds netted the entrepreneurs \$180. This windfall they proceeded to spend at J. Press for two sheepskin-lined overcoats which carried the partners through some twenty winters.

Books may have been his secret passion, but throughout his college years he led a lively life not untypical of any well-to-do student of the time who sought acceptance by his peers through extracurricular activities. In his sophomore year he was elected vice president of his Class, selected for the Dickey or DKE (one of the first "sixteen" chosen for the Hasty Pudding Club) and gained membership in the Delphic Club (popularly known as the Gas House). By his senior year he became president of Phillips Brooks House (the undergraduate social service center), president of the *Harvard Register* (an annual containing summary articles and records of undergraduate life), a member of the Student Council, and manager of varsity hockey. Whatever doubts he may have earlier entertained regarding his capacity for friendship and competitive success were dissipated by his Harvard undergraduate experience.

Looking back, Hofer estimated that he only spent about an hour a week studying and took "a good many cinch courses." Otherwise he would never have been able to carry such a heavy non-academic schedule. One such course was Professor William Winter's public speaking class in Holden Chapel, a "nice practical course and very easy." Further it was lightened by unexpected flashes of pleasure such as the day when William Ross Wallace, 1920 (known in his youth as



PHILIP HOFER

Born March 14, 1898, at Cincinnati, Ohio. Home address, Grandin Road, East Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, Ohio. Prepared at Pomfret School. In college four years as undergraduate. Assistant Manager Freshman Hockey Team, Manager University Hockey Team, 1920-1921. Institute of 1770, D.K.E., Hasty Pudding Club, Signet Society, Phoenix Club, S. K. Club, Delphic Club, Vice-President Sophomore Class, Editor-in-Chief Freshman *Red Book*, President Phillips Brooks House, 1920-1921; *Register*, President, 1921; Student Council, 1920-1921.

F. A. O. T. C., Camp Zachary Taylor, Kentucky, October, 1918.

Harvard University Archives

From the Harvard Nineteen Twenty-One Class Album



Frontispiece of one of Philip Hofer's early purchases,
now in the Houghton Library.

Bot of H. J. Bartlett, Cornhill, Boston
in the early autumn of 1917 as a
Freshman at Harvard.

This is the first so-called "rare",
and illustrated book that I ever
purchased - the start of my book
collecting! I paid about \$8⁰⁰.

P.H.

July 21, 1970

58 years later...

Somewhere I think we have the
original drawings for this book!

And put on shelf

4/81 P.H.

64 yrs later

Philip Hofer recorded these notes on the flyleaf
of the volume.

King of Christmas Island, which had once been leased to the Ross family), declaimed, "Ah, to be in Holden now that Winter's here" and was thrown out of class. Another was B. A. G. Fuller's discourses on the Greek philosophers. And perhaps the most memorable, "dear little Mr. Maynadier" (Assistant Professor G. Howard Maynadier), who gave Hofer high marks because the young man already knew a fair amount about the Arthurian legends and brought with him "an abiding interest and enthusiasm" which Mr. Maynadier very much appreciated. Thus, though his studies occupied a minor amount of Hofer's time, Harvard as a whole whetted his appetite for an intellectual life.

Following his graduation cum laude from the College, there was a year's interlude at the Harvard Business School, which then had its classes in and near the Yard with its library and reading room in Widener. His decision to take business courses was, however, more pretext than purpose — anything to postpone the day when he would have to succumb to paternal pressure and go into the coal business. The year was far from a success; but as soon as his first-year courses were over, he headed for Europe with two friends — his classmate, Sumner Roberts, and the newly graduated George Appleton, 1922, neither of them particularly bookish or artistically minded, yet good traveling companions.

This was his third trip to Europe, the first on his own, and Philip stretched it into a six-month journey. There were many more such trips in the years ahead — from 1928 on — all told some sixty visits to England and a similar number to other European nations, especially France and Italy; also nine visits to Japan, two to Southeast Asia, three to India, two to Taiwan, four or five to Hong Kong, one to South America, one to China, one to Kashmir, one to Afghanistan, and many to Canada.

Hofer and his congenial friends traveled through England, France, Austria, Germany, and Italy, and everywhere possible the avid young bookman visited book dealers listed in the guide books or recommended by acquaintances. By this time Hofer had refined his chief interest into what might be called the art of the book, broadly defined to include type design, calligraphy, illustration and printing techniques. Although he made the mistake of acquiring a few incomplete books or volumes in poor condition, it was proof of his early taste that he was not dissatisfied with his first book-buying adventures.

I cannot exaggerate the excitement I felt putting my foot on the doorsill of Bernard Quaritch at 11 Grafton St., off Piccadilly. It was then undoubtedly the greatest rare-book store in the world and I could imagine the glorious books to be found inside even though I was well aware that I would not be able to afford 90 per cent of them. It lived up to my expectations.

The general ambiance of the shop was slightly musty, with green baize covers over many of the cases, dusty curtains, and quiet salespeople. I was not grand enough to seek a managing director of the firm but took the clerk who was willing to serve me. They were all quiet sorts like myself, and I found it absorbing, because no sooner would I mention a type of book or an actual title that I liked than something very like it would appear at once.

Quaritch's stock was large. Years of war had added to it since there had been no collecting to speak of in England in those times and I could have had the greatest field day in my life but for my lack of means, and certain fear that my family would murder me for extravagance on my return to America. I still regret that I did not buy lots more, risking any fate except non-possession!

After this interlude of sheer pleasure, Hofer submitted to "exile" in Cleveland. "Having longed to enter school-teaching or academic life, I was very naturally (given my father's generation) and properly (given previous spoiling) pushed into the coal business for four long years." Hofer himself chose Cleveland "because Cincinnati seemed a pokey sort of old-fashioned place" and he felt the need to be on his own. Coal was still the leading energy source, but the job with W. H. Warner & Co. was unremunerative and uninspiring, and the grasping attitude of the mine operators toward their miners turned what interest Hofer may have had in the coal and coke industry into real hostility.

He early resolved that it would be but a temporary phase of his life, and he managed to find many fellow spirits outside business. Theodore and Caroline Sizer were particularly sympathetic friends. "Tubby" Sizer, Yale 1916 — father of the Harvard dean of the same name — had been a friend of Hofer's brother Charles, and, like Philip, had been pushed into business by his parents before managing to demonstrate that a life of art was more his *sorte* than a life of lumber. The Sizers adopted Hofer with generosity and kindness. Tubby was at the time a double curator at the Cleveland Art Museum responsible for both prints and Oriental art. Hofer not only learned a great deal from him about museums but also received the warmest encouragement to pursue seriously his newly awakened interest in the illustrated book and in book design. Sizer's comforting prediction was that Hofer would soon make enough money so that he could

abandon business for more scholarly pursuits. Hofer had a standing invitation with the Sizlers, and many other doors opened to him through their interest.

Cleveland turned out to be a very congenial place. Hofer lived with a group of young bachelors, among them his classmate Roy Larsen (later one of the Harvard Library's greatest benefactors), James Bush (uncle of Vice President George Bush) and Henry Hatch who later married Eleanor Cottrell (sister of Hofer's subsequent colleague George William Cottrell, long editor of this journal). Despite a busy social life, Hofer found his greatest joy in poring over booksellers' catalogs, and in conducting a furiously active correspondence with his newly found bookseller friends. Since he was not paid much by the coal company, he was only able to indulge his book purchases thanks to the periodic generosity of his father and mother. Hofer's piles of books got higher and higher in the house on Euclid Heights. Mrs. Jenezek complained that she couldn't properly clean his room, and one or two of the bachelors threatened that Hofer, unless he quit piling up literary treasure, would have to get out.

Even the business experience was not an entire waste of time. The wedding of his Harvard roommate's brother provided a fortuitous meeting with the international banker and U.S. Treasury official, Norman H. Davis. Mr. Davis's comments in a family conversation about investments led Hofer to borrow money from his mother to go into the stock market, and he made an extraordinary profit in a utility holding company, Electric Bond & Share. This good fortune, well before the later stock market debacle, enabled the incipient plunger to form a little investment firm, Philip Hofer & Co., in which even his employer joined. In those times between 1924 and 1928, Hofer recalled, "you couldn't lose, and I made quite a bit of money, much more than we were really entitled to." As a result, he was able to move happily in Cleveland's social world and also to continue ordering books from those booksellers with whom he had maintained precarious connections since his 1922 trip abroad.

In the autumn of 1927 he threw up his job. He could afford to do what he liked, and with proof of his business success he managed to enlist the sympathy of his parents, who had been helping Hofer's older brother, Myron, finance his foreign service career in China, Japan, and later, South America. Thrilled with his new freedom, he set forth in January 1928 for Morocco, full of high expectations about

the beauties of Marrakesh, the Atlas Mountains, Moroccan rugs and wall hangings, Islamic manuscripts, food, wine, and possibly women. In Morocco he managed to acquire several Islamic manuscripts — none costing more than \$200 — Korans of no particular importance as texts but exceptional for their beautiful calligraphy and ornamentation in bold inks of black, green, red, and yellow. From Morocco he went to Spain, then to France and England, a free spirit for the first time, spending the dollars he had made himself, indulging even then his preference for books over money.

Hofer never returned to business. Instead he enrolled in the Harvard Graduate School as a candidate for a master's degree in fine arts. Aside from the courses he took and the greater leisure he had to consider his future career and deepen his knowledge of the fields that attracted him, his two years in Cambridge were important for two happenings. The first was a friendship with George Parker Winship, who was in charge of the Harvard Treasure Room (the department of rare books and manuscripts in Widener Library). The second was Hofer's decision in 1928 to sell all his first editions and concentrate on well-printed books that were well-illustrated and well-bound. So his books were eventually put up at auction in New York, and he bade goodbye to his fine copies of Blackstone, Boswell, Fielding, Gibbon, Gray, Pepys, and Gilbert White, in favor of a more restricted and difficult area of collecting.

Hofer enjoyed Winship enormously. A man of wit and engaging manner, Winship transmitted his infectious enthusiasm to generations of Harvard students who took his course, *History of the Printed Book* (Fine Arts 5e), which began in 1916 and carried on until 1931. Hofer got a straight A in the course. When Douglas Gordon, 1923, lecturing on Winship recently, claimed that it was almost impossible to get an A from Winship, Hofer was quick to contradict him. "It was quite easy," he asserted. "Indeed I think that with the same application of work, one student would get a B if he gave G. P. W. a luncheon, but the one who entertained him for dinner inevitably got an A. Otherwise, I have no way of reasoning why I was thus favored!"

The connection with Winship led to an equally joyful acquaintance with another collector, Winship's friend, Augustin H. Parker, 1897. "A Boston Brahmin of the first order," Parker had a delightful house in Charles River Village and an impressive book collection. Parker's

main interest was Goldsmith, and he had assembled most of Goldsmith's work, particularly several hundred editions of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. One suspects that an even deeper attraction for Hofer was a collection of works illustrated by Walter Crane and Randolph Caldecott, which Parker's wife, Caroline Dabney Parker, had begun to gather and which after her death came to Harvard with a supporting fund from her husband.

It took Hofer an extra half-year to get his master's degree, because he had never taken any fine arts courses before and had to start with the introductory survey course. Even though he had to "work like mad" to catch up, Hofer found the experience totally exciting. Under Langdon Warner and Paul Pelliot, he found new interest in Oriental art. Arthur Pope, quiet, sleepy, dry, conducted a course in art appreciation which Hofer felt was the best he ever had. With only six or seven students in his class, Pope was able to take the group to the Museum of Fine Arts or to Fenway Court and stand them in front of a painting and ask them to criticize it. Pope never hesitated to point out that Mrs. Gardner's *Europa* by Titian was one of the greatest paintings in America, that she owned a great Vermeer, but that her Rembrandts were of lesser quality. In class his comments were stimulating and evocative, and his slides provided marvelous comparisons.

Hofer's one slip from highest ranking was the B he received in Paul Sachs's seminar on prints and drawings. This, of course, was Hofer's deep interest, but he was taking too many other courses and in electing to survey Rembrandt's work he had picked too difficult a subject for his course paper. Still, the B would not have stood in his way had he decided to go on to the doctorate, his original intention.

Personal reasons, however, led him to abandon graduate study. His father was seriously ill, and his mother needed her younger son's help with family affairs, since Philip's brother, Myron, was then in Santiago de Chile as first secretary of the U.S. Embassy and could not give practical help. At almost the same time, through the interest of Archibald Cary Coolidge, who had encouraged Hofer to further his interest in the history of the book arts, he found that an old friend of the Delphic Club, Franklin Eddy Parker, could offer him a connection with the New York Public Library as part-time "advisor" to the Spencer Collection. (Parker had been Coolidge's secretary and later executive secretary of the Friends of the Harvard Library.) Still more persuasive was the promise of proximity to the young lady in



Harvard University Archives

Arthur Pope, ca. 1940, from the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*

New York who was rapidly becoming the most important person in his life.

In September 1927 Hofer had been an usher at the Camden wedding of a cousin, Olga Ault Carter, among whose bridesmaids was Frances L. Heckscher. There was instant admiration and compatibility, and a long-distance courtship ensued between Boston and New York. But Philip proceeded cautiously. For one thing, he had several times been disappointed in love. For another, Bunnie Heckscher was then a very wealthy girl (later her family lost much of their fortune in the stock market crash), and Philip was shy about chasing an heiress. But mutual understanding eventually ripened into love, and a few months after Charles Hofer's death Bunnie suggested that they

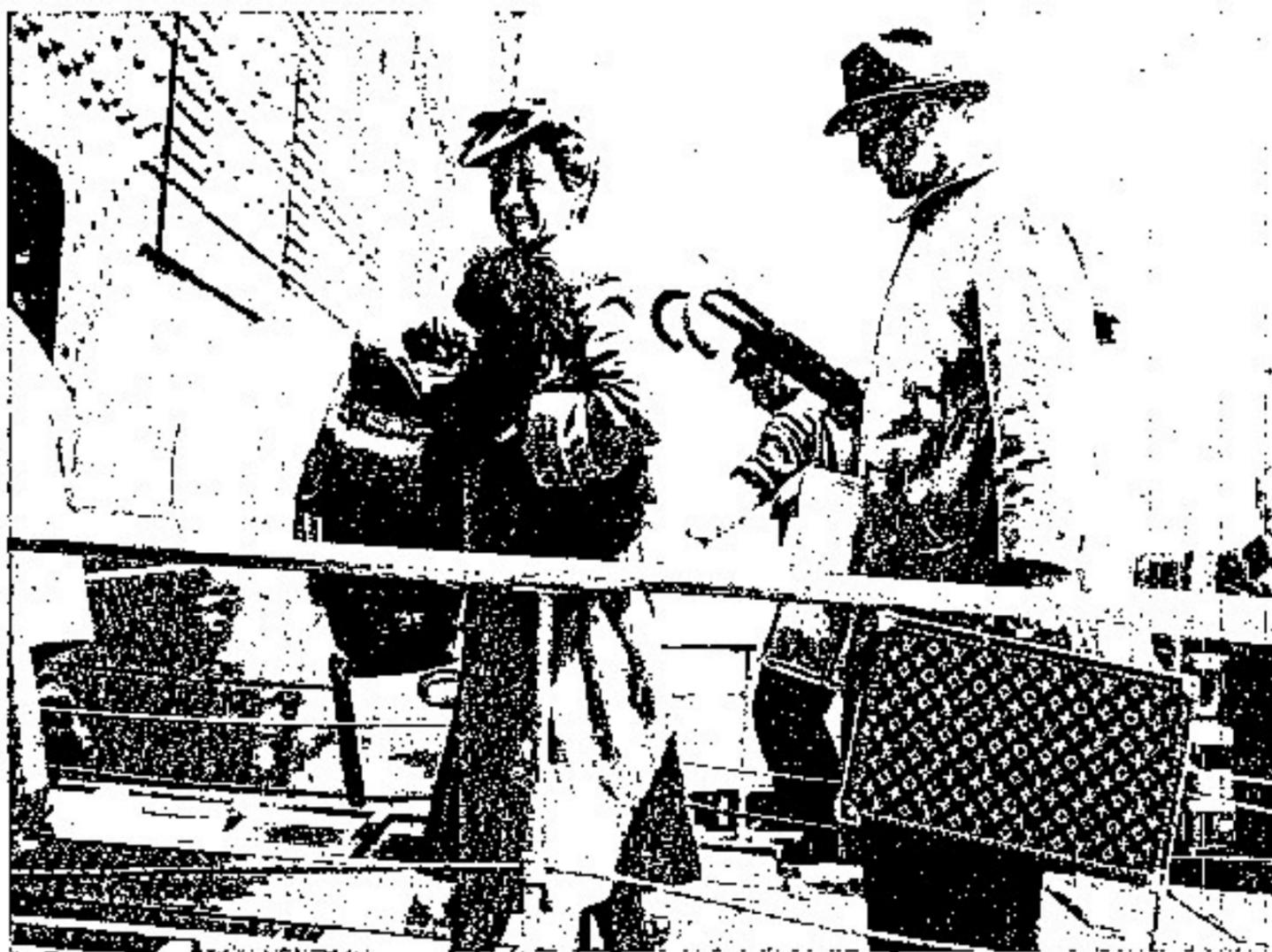
travel abroad together. She would secure an appropriate chaperone. Philip would supply a car. And so in the summer of 1929 they motored through France and Switzerland, not only visiting Bunnie's relatives and seeing the sights but also allowing time for booksellers. A high point was their stay at Rutenberg, the beautiful estate outside Lucerne where lived Charles Hoyt, a delightful host who taught Hofer a great deal about Oriental art.

One day Philip proposed going to Lugano and back on a book-hunting expedition to see the antiquarian bookman Giuseppe Martini. Although it was a five-hour train trip each way, Bunnie joyfully fell in with the idea of doing it all in one day and leaving their chaperone behind. They had a wonderful day, Philip acquired some

beautiful manuscripts, and the Martinis gave them a delightful dinner. The only trouble was that the train back did not run on Tuesday. Signora Martini lent Bunnie a suitcase and a capacious nightdress so dense and heavy it could have been made of canvas. Signor Martini equipped Hofer with a man-sized nightgown of similar material and lent him a carpet bag. The young and proper couple then went to the local hotel and took two adjacent single rooms, under the names of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Hofer, which required a bit of explaining. Most of the night they spent talking to each other by tapping on the wall, and next morning on the train in the long dark passage of the St. Gothard tunnel their daring escapade came to a decisive conclusion. They became engaged. But even so, because of Philip's mother's belief that marriage to the daughter of divorced parents was not prudent and needed time to prove itself, they were not



Bookplates for Frances and Philip Hofer by Rudolph Koch and his studio



Frances and Philip Hofer embarking on one of their many journeys to Europe, ca. 1954. In Hofer's hand is the Vuitton travelling-case which was his constant companion at home and abroad and was, as often as not, filled with books.

allowed to tell the world for a year. They were married on 1 November 1930. This happy union of almost 48 years lasted until Frances Hofer's death on 24 April 1978.

The Spencer Collection, in the New York Public Library, to which Hofer came after the European trips, had been assembled by a New York bibliophile, William A. Spencer, who had spent a lifetime collecting books, mainly in Paris. He was interested primarily in the beauty of books, but he also had bought incunabula (books printed in the first fifty years of printing from about 1450, roughly the time of the Gutenberg Bible, to the year 1501). Hofer's task was to continue developing this fine collection. And this serves in part to explain why he did not make a point of specializing in incunabula. Not only did he, at that time, lack the personal funds to compete, but also it would have been improper to purchase a volume which had not first been offered to the Spencer Collection.

During his four-and-a-half years with the Spencer Collection Hofer was "utterly happy." The regime of the New York Public Library was beneficent. The Director, Edwin Hatfield Anderson, "a charming gentleman," did not enter his life at all, and his immediate superior, the renowned Harry Miller Lydenberg, 1897, was "one of the most wonderful librarians I have ever known."

Mr. Lydenberg and I could have not possibly have been more different in background, he, a Southerner, tousle-headed and always deprecating his keenness, although possessing a high degree of intelligence and competence, and I, of a more cultivated background but no more gentlemanly qualities, and with an equal zest for good books. Harry Lydenberg said to me, "All I care is that you should get the books and I'll fight your battles with the Board of Trustees." He did this very effectively. This help was particularly important, because the principal trustee of the New York Public Library at that time, a very austere gentleman from Tuxedo Park named Grenville Kane, chairman of the board of the Erie Railroad, was exceedingly opinionated. One of Kane's extraordinary convictions was that subsequent to World War I, there was no possible reason for any human being to buy a German book.

I, of course, thought differently, and thought that perhaps the war hatreds would subside. So when there came on the market the most marvelous examples of Dürer's three great books, *The Apocalypse*, *The Life of the Virgin*, and *The Passion*, the uniform binding done at Nuremberg, where the books were printed and illustrated by Dürer in the years 1498 to 1511, I arranged to purchase those masterpieces at the Rahr sale in Paris in 1931. They cost \$23,000, the highest price, practically, of the sale. It was mid-Depression, and Grenville Kane took one look and said or, rather, screamed, "German"! Nevertheless, H. M. Lydenberg pushed the matter through.

In 1934 Philip Hofer became the first Assistant Director of the Pierpont Morgan Library, a post he held until the middle of June 1937. For anyone seriously interested in a career in this field, the post at the Morgan was so exciting an opportunity that when offered it, Hofer was willing to come, full-time, for \$2,000 a year, although at the New York Public his salary had been \$7,000 for half-time. The post enabled him to broaden his acquaintance, particularly with foreign scholars, to sharpen his critical ability, and to learn about the Morgan Library's manuscripts and early illustrated books. But in another sense his Morgan Library years were a near disaster because of the need to subdue originality, self-interest, and ambition to the encompassing domination of the Morgan's director, Belle da Costa Greene.

Belle Green, Pierpont Morgan's librarian since 1906, continued to head the library after its incorporation as a public institution in 1924.

Brilliant, dynamic, authoritarian, eccentric, Miss Greene had had assistants before this, but none of them had lasted more than a few months. Miss Greene exacted total loyalty from her staff and was not one to tolerate rivals.

For the first year or so, life moved smoothly. The Morgan Library, although public by charter, was still very much a family affair. J. Pierpont Morgan ("Jack" Morgan), 1889, son of its founder John Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913), had headed the library since his father's death, and the library building was almost a part of Mr. Morgan's property, lying only a short path from the Morgan house on Madison Avenue and bordering Morgan land for half a block along 36th Street between Madison and Park. Morgan also had a private office in the library with a private phone connected to his house, and

here he transacted the business of the Jekyll Island Club and other personal affairs. Since Mr. Morgan was maintaining a great public trust at his own expense, no one was going to criticize him or charge conflict of interest, but in fact Mr. Morgan's desires dominated and had a restricting effect on library policy. Morgan wished the library to continue his father's collecting policies without drastic change, and a cornerstone of those policies was to repose total trust in the discretion of Belle da Costa Greene. Thus Miss Greene did as she pleased.

In retrospect Hofer suspected that Miss Greene only wanted an assistant who would conform totally to her wishes and ideas, certainly not a potential successor. Although she had great personal magnetism, and played her role as librarian with dignity and panache, in her personal relationships she was scheming, capricious, and fractious. Her administration of the library was without fault; although



Harvard University Archives

Harry Lydenberg, ca. 1922, from the *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Report of the Class of 1897*.

she exhibited "an iron will and a fair measure of cruelty . . . I would willingly have stayed her slave," Hofer declared, "had her concepts not interfered with certain ideals of my own."

The Morgan Library's crowning glory was and is its splendid collection of early printed books and manuscripts, the latter the greatest in this country in terms of quality. Many of these were in magnificent early bindings, but Hofer found the rest of the collection lacking in the illustrated books which most interested him, except for some gorgeous French eighteenth-century books and a few others purchased for their superb bindings. From time to time Hofer tried to interest Miss Greene in acquiring examples of book-making from later periods — from the sixteenth, seventeenth, nineteenth, and even twentieth centuries — but his suggestions were rebuffed. Further, Miss Greene would buy an illustrated book if *she* found it but preferred not to buy one on the recommendation of her assistant. Her negative attitude had one beneficial result. It enabled Hofer to begin seriously and systematically purchasing, for his own collection, books and manuscripts in the centuries that did not interest the Morgan Library, and in those post-Depression years the prices were in many cases quite cheap.

The other great advantage was the opportunity to ask questions and to learn. Hofer came to know some of the great émigré art historians and bookmen such as Erwin Panofsky, Richard Krautheimer, and Julius Held, and the English scholars Campbell Dodgson, Laurence Binyon, and Arthur M. Hind. But the most influential of the acquaintances he made at this time was William M. Ivins, curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ivins, a graduate of Harvard College (A.B. 1901) and of Columbia Law School (LL.B. 1907), had been recommended highly by Hofer's old friend of Cleveland days, Theodore Sizer. Hofer was not surprised to find that Ivins was also a friend of Belle Greene, although their friendship was an off-again on-again affair, full of quarrels and rivalry, for "each was a demon" and knew how to get back at the other.

About twenty years older than Hofer, deeply knowledgeable, precise, and discriminating in the very field that Hofer had decided to make his own, Billy Ivins had a lasting influence on Hofer's career. Ivins taught Hofer how to look. Ivins used to say that he studied prints by training his eye first and by reading second. "This is just the opposite of what most people do," Hofer once remarked. "They

read and read and never get to the point of really looking at the object." Ivins's approach was to look at the picture as a whole and then fasten upon those parts of the picture that stood out: to look, look, look, before analyzing, then to study and then finally to buy, if that was the purpose of the study.

"I have never changed that process," Hofer declared, "and for this I am deeply indebted to Ivins, although in other ways he made my life miserable, because he was a rather cantankerous, almost sadistic individual who couldn't stand rivalry of any sort. Since I had private means to buy good things and Ivins had none, it made him furious to observe my success when he had told me how to do it. Further, the Morgan Library had extensive purchase funds, and the Metropolitan's resources were very limited for the purchase of choice items. Ivins would have loved to have been assistant director of the Morgan, associated with Belle Greene."

Years later, talking to that astute Boston print collector W. G. Russell Allen (A. B. 1903), Hofer discovered that Allen too had learned and followed Ivins's philosophy. "How did you ever manage to keep peace with him?" Hofer asked. "Well," answered Allen, "I'm about twice his size and about the same age, while you were younger and in awe of his informed taste. So I felt no awe for Billy and whenever he started to rail at me or pin me in some way I would stretch myself to full height [Allen was at least 6 feet 3 inches], throw back my shoulders and say, 'Shut up Billy!' That usually did the trick."

Hofer worked hard at his job and continued his personal book-buying on the side. But he came to realize that Miss Greene was so well entrenched and so free to pursue her own goals for the Morgan Library, with the total support of the Morgan family and the trustees, that there was no long-term prospect of any shift of direction or opportunity for individual advancement.

It was clear that the time had come for a change if the Morgan Library management was not willing to broaden its scope in the fields which Hofer thought appropriate — to begin purchasing in other centuries and particularly to develop an interest in illustrated books and the history of printing and calligraphy, including examples of the best contemporary work. Hofer proposed a plan to Miss Greene along those lines; and as proof of his good will offered to give the library the most valuable manuscript he owned, the Lothian Bible,

or Royal Bible, which Hofer had acquired for \$8,000 at the Lothian sale, a price so low only because it lacked a couple of illuminated initial letters and had an unattractive nineteenth-century binding. But it was a splendid twelfth-century manuscript with the additional interest of having a front page that bore the signatures of a whole series of royal visitors through the centuries, a kind of Lothian guest book reserved for kings and princes.

Miss Greene was not enthusiastic about Hofer's idea and predicted that the trustees would reject it. Indeed, without her support his proposal seemed doomed, but he felt he had to take an affirmative stand at some point. When the trustees refused, Hofer used their refusal as an excuse to tender his resignation, and it was accepted with "unconcealed rancor" on Miss Greene's part. In fact, she later sought to give the impression that she had requested Hofer to leave, and whatever friendliness had existed between them became a cool, always correct formality. Belle Greene continued to run the Morgan Library until her death in 1950.

Instead of looking immediately for another position, Hofer decided to take his time about deciding what to do. Thanks to his careful investing, he had been able to improve his lot despite the depression. As a result he and Bunnie bought a 75-acre farm in Sharon, in northwestern Connecticut, not too far from either New Haven or New York, where they could be quiet and think things out.

It so happened that at this time Hofer's friend, William Alexander Jackson, a fellow bibliophile and member of the Grolier Club, had a falling out with Carl Pforzheimer, whose famed collection of English literature he had been cataloging. Jackson and Hofer had on various occasions discussed the possibility of forming a working relationship, and now, just by chance, the opportunity was perhaps at hand. Hofer particularly wanted to get into university work and investigated his chances at Yale. Jackson, however, refused even to consider Yale because of doubts that he could work easily with Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis and Chauncy Brewster Tinker, both of whom had great influence on library matters, particularly Lewis, who as a member of the Yale Corporation was widely influential. Hofer's real hope was some connection with Harvard, and Jackson agreed, even to the extent of going to Cambridge in 1937 to see how the land lay. There would have been small chance under the regime of Robert Pierpont Blake, who was a noted Slavic scholar but not an inspired

library director. However, Jackson discovered that Blake was planning to retire at the end of the academic year, and there was a rumor that his successor's name might be announced within a fortnight.

To Jackson's and Hofer's delight, Harvard's choice for library director was Keyes DeWitt Metcalf, chief of the reference section of the New York Public Library. Both of them knew him, Hofer particularly, because both he and Metcalf had worked under Harry Lydenberg, the assistant director at the main library. And almost as soon as Metcalf discovered that Jackson and Hofer were eager to move to Harvard, he secured Jackson's appointment as rare book librarian and Hofer's as curator of printing and graphic arts with the added responsibility of managing the Friends of The Harvard College Library. (Hofer had previously held an honorary curatorship of "Books on the Fine Arts.") His new status made it possible for Hofer eventually to move his collection to Cambridge from the New York storage warehouse, where for several years he had kept it shelved in a commodious study room.

Because of the bad financial times Hofer had had to cut down somewhat on his book purchases. His wife, Bunnie, saw that it was unlikely that much of the Heckscher money would ever come to her, because of unfortunate investments made by her father and grandfather. Therefore, she urged great caution on her husband's part, and he in turn consulted friends in financial circles as to the most prudent course to preserve and slowly enlarge his capital. With the careful purchase of issues like General Acceptance Corporation 3.5 percent bonds and Christiana Securities preferred stock, he achieved high yield and a share in the future of Du Pont and General Motors, then managing to survive the bad times. Since he took a fairly pessimistic view of the future, he convinced himself that to spend capital for books that might never be seen again on the market was a perfectly reasonable course. Moreover, what books he was buying were scarce and becoming scarcer. As the future proved, it was not necessary, as he once feared, to give up on America and look for new horizons in New Zealand (he seriously had considered that, he said), and almost everything he bought eventually had a phenomenal rise in value. In effect, his consuming passion for book-buying in hard times, which less sensitive people could have dismissed as delusion, gave him, several decades later, the reputation for prescience.

But to return to Jackson and Harvard. The two had first met

through the Grolier Club in 1929 when both were members of the exhibitions committee. Born in 1905 Jackson was seven years younger than Hofer, a graduate of Williams College (1927) who had a reputation for brilliance, earned during his undergraduate years and his later work as descriptive cataloguer of the Chapin Library. Jackson soon immersed himself in what became a lifelong preoccupation, revising the *Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640*. When Hofer first met him, Jackson had begun a seven-year stint preparing the catalogue of the great library of English literature owned by Carl H. Pforzheimer, Sr. Since both Jackson and Hofer used the reference shelves of the Grolier Club with great frequency, they were often there together. Hofer remembered that he used to run up the ladders faster than Jackson, while Jackson, with his incredible memory, would point out where the books were. Soon they were fast friends and enthusiastic traveling companions. A weekend visit to Williamstown and the Chapin Library was merely the foretaste of many trips in the subsequent years, made to explore public collections and private libraries in this country and abroad; although their wives were frequently included, the ladies all too often had to amuse themselves or suffer the lonely fate of bibliophilic "widows."

For thirty-five years Jackson and Hofer saw more of each other than any other men, and Hofer had the fondest and most admiring recollections of that close professional relationship. Although quite different in temperament, and sometimes sharp opposites, the two men complemented each other in a partnership that was unusually beneficial to Harvard. "We never quarreled," Hofer declared, "and we disagreed only occasionally, because Bill Jackson was usually right. We backed each other to the hilt. Bill did more for me than I for him because Bill was the abler man, but it was the combination of forces that made an exceptional working relationship. We both were lucky to have been endowed with an instinctive ability to recognize quality and to foresee what a library should try to acquire. Jackson's most unusual gift was a phenomenal memory. He could remember forever in what library he had seen a certain book and even on what shelf. He carried with him a verbal file of all the chinks in the Harvard collections and what needed filling. Of course I could do no such thing. It used to distress him and he'd say, 'Don't you ever try to do it?'"

In addition to exceptional intellectual capacities, Jackson had great personal charm and managed to make very good friends in both England and the United States — the Wheatland brothers, Stephen and David, were particularly close to him, and he thoroughly enjoyed his leisure hours sailing with them on the coast of Maine. But Bill Jackson permitted himself few leisure hours. He was an omnivorous man who never had time to do all the things he wanted. Moreover, his health was never as good as his fierce drive made it appear. He had had a record of pulmonary tuberculosis which kept him out of military service in World War II and on several occasions seriously affected his health. Yet he pushed himself instinctively, and his work schedule, which regularly included Saturday and Sunday in the library, was the despair of his wife.

A few days before the famous New England hurricane of September 1938, Jackson and Hofer joined Keyes Metcalf at Harvard. While the hurricane swept through Cambridge with a destructive force unmatched in two hundred years, Metcalf's new team began a quiet determined effort to deal firmly and constructively with a neglected and potentially dangerous situation. Harvard's most valuable volumes were housed in what was called the Treasure Room area of the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library, comprising a reading and exhibition room near the entrance lobby (space now occupied by the cataloging department), and below that a work-room of similar size behind which was a very crowded stack area. The fact that most of the rare book collections had to be in the basement was dangerous, since there was always the chance of damage due from ground water or burst pipes. Equally undesirable was the collection's proximity to the principal steam pipes of the Cambridge Gas & Electric Co. which provided heat to the library building. These ran immediately beneath the rare book stacks and work space, with the result, Hofer recalled, that "when the rare book rooms were closed, and the windows shut, even if the heat was turned off the warmth was transmitted through the floor and he who first opened a door to our section received a blast of hot air (86°) at all seasons; and the leather bindings of some of our best books were deteriorating (drying, indeed dying!) rapidly." Jackson estimated that, despite corrective measures, annual deterioration approached \$30,000 in value.

Little could initially be done. Metcalf had no money for conservation, and he felt he had to give priority to building the reference

collection and to making more room in the Widener stacks and creating a depository for little-used books across the River. In addition, he set high importance on new underground stack space in the Yard, and a library building for undergraduates. It was disheartening to be told their needs had to wait, but both Jackson and Hofer did their best to make sure the objective was not forgotten. In the spring of 1939 Jackson and Hofer received invitations to attend the annual meeting of the Library Visiting Committee. In anticipation of this Jackson drafted a proposal for a new building for the storage and study of rare books and manuscripts under properly controlled conditions of humidity and temperature. Although the meeting was attended by a number of committee members likely to be sympathetic — Keyes Metcalf, of course, and five distinguished bookmen, Augustus Loring, Carleton R. Richmond, William King Richardson, Lathrop C. Harper, and a promising new convert, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. — Jackson's place on the program was hardly propitious. It followed a long cocktail hour and substantial dinner as well as a speech by Charles Warren, chairman of the Visiting Committee, that, in Hofer's words, "I still think was one of the most boring I ever listened to." Metcalf spoke about immediate needs, and then at the end of the evening came Jackson's statement, direct and rather brief. Hofer recalled that Warren gazed "ominously" into space and at Jackson's conclusion began a rather long disquisition on the unessential nature of rare books. He took the position that the considerable sum needed for a rare book library would be better spent for some other library purpose. Fortunately for the cause, Arthur Houghton rose and uttered a strong dissent from the chairman's views. At the conclusion of the meeting he proposed that Jackson and Hofer join him for a drink at the Ritz and a discussion of the evening's events. As Hofer said:

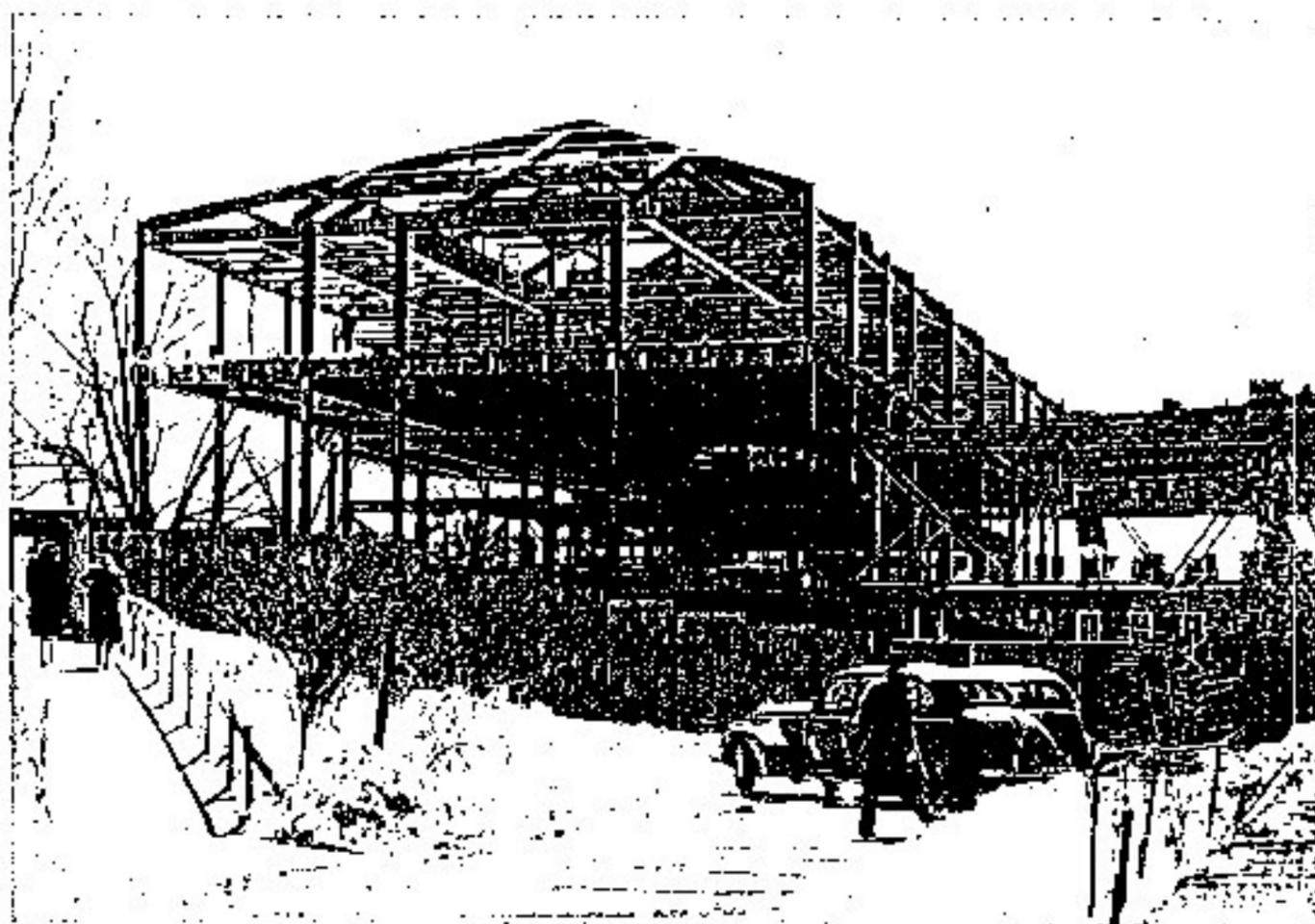
This was the golden opportunity, for the moment was right and the man was present who could, and desired to, rectify matters. We talked ways and means. There would have to be an agreement from our chief, Metcalf, to let us have a money-raising campaign, and there was the obvious difficulty of a world war in the offing. I was the first of the three to speak, and made the proposal that, come June, we dared not wait longer — I would supply my Buick car, and would embark with Arthur, if he could spare the time, on a fairly wide money-raising expedition, including the Middle West.

On a hot June day Arthur arrived in Cambridge. My Buick roadster, with ample luggage space, was ready for a long trip if necessary. So was I; but, it soon appeared

that Arthur wasn't — quite. I don't think it was my car, or the length of the journey. It was the work ahead in the heat. Arthur turned from my car to Bill Jackson and me and asked if we could go inside and discuss the matter. Not quite sure what this meant, we did go into the cooling shelter of the Widener building, and Arthur, quite nobly and unexpectedly, asked what an adequate rare book library building would cost. Bill Jackson estimated the sum of about a million dollars. Arthur then said, "Suppose I give it all? It would save so much wear and tear." We were stunned and unbelievably relieved.

After consultation with Keyes Metcalf, and Perry Shaw & Hepburn, the architectural firm Arthur preferred, the sum appeared about right for those days before the war, and before inflation. Our gratitude was boundless and in the same spirit as Arthur — although in less bountiful sums — William King Richardson and I, both having proposed we would give \$10,000 apiece, insisted we would hold to that as a bit of extra help. So it was agreed most happily and in a remarkably short space of time. The motor trip was off. The architect began to draw up plans. President Conant is remembered to have remarked, "Here we are with a hole in the seat of our pants, needing many more practical things, and someone offers us a rare book library!" In the end, without too much disagreement, it was accepted with thanks.

The erection of a new building so close to Widener presented many aesthetic problems for the architect and the library administration.



Harvard University Archives

Houghton Library under construction, March 1941. The bridge connecting it to Widener Library appears at the right.



Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Houghton Library

At the Conference and Exhibition of Type Faces, held at Smith College in April 1942, Philip Hofer (in the center) discusses a point concerning foundry type with Beatrice Warde, typographic historian, and Clarence Kennedy, Smith College Professor of Art from 1916 to 1960.

It had to blend attractively with the structures nearby, have access to Widener without being an addition to that building, and to provide maximum possible stack space underground. Taken as a whole, Hofer felt the building was amazingly successful, combining utility and functionalism with a spirit of respect for the architectural forms of the past. Contrasted with the more recent and larger Beinecke Library at Yale, a masterpiece of modern design with its translucent walls and gorgeous central stack of polished brass, the Houghton Library lacks drama. Yet Hofer considered it superior to Beinecke in its functional design: "Harvard will always be deeply indebted to Arthur Amory Houghton Jr. for the rare book library which has served so well for more than forty years and promises essentially to serve as Harvard's main rare book repository for many years to come."

Now that Harvard at last had an almost perfect place for its rare books, Hofer was able to create in the building the facilities for studying the history of book illustration and design of which he had dreamed since first visiting the British Museum twenty years before. Furthermore, Hofer was able to assemble at Harvard all his own books and manuscripts previously housed under several roofs. At last he had a comfortable office for his reference books, a handsome reading room for scholars to work in and for arranging exhibitions, ample room for his own and Harvard's distinguished collections relating to the graphic arts, plus space for new acquisitions.

(To be concluded.)

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

WILLIAM BENTINCK-SMITH is Senior Associate in the Office of the Secretary to the University *Emeritus* and Honorary Curator of Type Specimens and Letter Design in the Harvard College Library.

DONALD GALLUP retired in 1980 after 33 years as Curator of the Collection of American Literature in the Yale University Library.

MICHAEL OCHS is Librarian of the Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library and Senior Lecturer on Music, Harvard University.

THORNTON WILDER was Charles Eliot Norton Professor at Harvard during the academic year 1950-1951.

EVERETT C. WILKIE, JR., is Crofut Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts in The Connecticut Historical Society.